

# THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW

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## RECENT GUIDE-POSTS TO JUVENILE LITERATURE<sup>1</sup>

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HERE IS an old Oxford motto which says:

"He who reads and reads  
And does not what he knows  
Is he who plows and plows  
And never sows."

In the broad field of literature, the children's librarian can never hope to plant the seed of curiosity which will awaken an interest, if she reads and reads and shares not the joy of reading with her patrons. She will fail to live up to the main purpose of her being which is to arouse an interest in good books and to foster this interest until it develops into a growing appreciation for the best.

She cannot accomplish her ideal by working alone. She must have the cooperation of the people who are also interested in the boys and girls who are her potential public. The school is her biggest point of contact and the teacher is her first aid. The teacher comes into close personal relationships with the children. She discovers their interest, and knows their variety of range. The librarian is acquainted with the books which will appeal to this variety of interests. By working together, the teacher and the librarian can bring the right books to the right child at the right time, awaken an interest in reading, and thus begin the cultivation of those ideals that will bring happiness and content from within.

It is the purpose of this article to call the

attention of teachers to some of the recent publications that have proved helpful to the librarian in selecting books for boys and girls. They are useful tools in the librarian's desk equipment. They may prove equally helpful to the teacher. They are books which the librarian desires to share with her co-workers.

The first book chosen for this list is *MUCH LOVED BOOKS* by James O'Donnell Bennett. This book is not a treatise on juvenile literature. The series of articles was first printed in the *Chicago Tribune* under the title *BEST SELLERS OF THE AGES*. The purpose, according to the foreword, is to emphasize the deathless news value of great books of ancient and modern time. The books selected range from the Bible, Homer, and Horace, down to Walt Whitman, Robert Louis Stevenson and Mark Twain. Out of the sixty thought-inspiring book discussions, twelve are concerning books that almost all critics agree should form the nucleus of every library for children. The list might be called "Twelve books that should not be missed by any child." Beginning with our youngest readers, and following up the scale of interests along the line of nursery rhymes, fairy tales, myths, legends and stories of travel and adventure, we have here discussed: "Mother Goose Melodies" and their author, Hans Andersen's "Fairy Tales," "Gullivers Travels," "Arabian Nights' Entertainments," Homer's "Odyssey," "Swiss Family Robinson," "Adventures of Huckleberry

<sup>1</sup> See Page 222

Finn," "Don Quixote," "Robinson Crusoe," "Treasure Island," "Pilgrim's Progress" and Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast." We might add also Dicken's "David Copperfield" and Franklin's "Autobiography," two titles popular with older boys and girls.

Another book, similar in scope but different in content, which should be included in this discussion is *THE DELIGHT OF GREAT BOOKS*, by John Erskine. This also is not a treatise on juvenile literature. In the opening chapter, "On Reading Great Books," the author states that he has attempted to speak of those aspects of books which make them immortal, or, as we say, which keep them alive. He points out in these books that which calls him back to read them again and again, what they say for an average man in our year, 1928, or, if you prefer, what our world looks like when we hold up to it these much-used mirrors. Anyone interested in the problem of selecting and recommending books for older boys and girls, the "teens," to use library parlance, will find stimulating help in each chapter of this book. Of particular interest to teachers and children's librarians are the discussions of Malory's "Le Morte D'Arthur," Spenser's "Faerie Queene," Shakespeare's "Tempest," and the chapter on Walter Scott. If one has not read "Moby Dick," by Herman Melville, this will be the first book on his list, after he has read Erskine's critical appreciation of it. He will also see Cooper's "Leatherstocking Tales" in a new light after having them compared with this master "poem" of the sea.

"Huckleberry Finn" is chosen by both Bennett and Erskine as a book worthy of being discussed in company with great pieces of literature. Erskine compares the "Adventures of Tom Sawyer," with its sequel, to the advantage of "Huckleberry Finn." We have here an evaluation of two stories fascinating not only to boys and girls but also to mature readers.

*ADVENTURES IN READING*, by May Lamberton Becker, opens up the big world of books to adolescents, with talks of books of various classes, chosen from the author's wide knowl-

edge of literature. Reading lists are found at the close of every chapter.

Let us now turn our attention to books of a somewhat different character, books the specific purpose of which is the evaluation of children's literature. Such a book is the *HANDBOOK OF CHILDREN'S LITERATURE*, by Emelyn E. Gardner and Eloise Ramsey. Everybody interested in the problems of directing the reading of children will find this book a very helpful guide. The authors speak from their wealth of experience in teaching children and in conducting courses in children's literature in normal schools and colleges. While the subject is treated from the viewpoint of children's interests, the historical background of children's literature is given in a summary arranged in chronological order. There is also a timely chapter on illustrated books for children. The bibliographies appended will be found useful both to librarians and teachers, and will facilitate the task of book selection.

*CHILDREN'S READING*, by Frances Jenkins Olcott, which for fourteen years has been regarded by parents, teachers and librarians as authoritative criticism on children's books and reading, has been revised and enlarged and issued in a new edition this year. The author, in this book, has answered in a simple practical way these questions often asked by parents: Of what value are books in the education of my children? What is the effect of bad reading? How may I interest my children in home-reading? What kind of books do children like? What books shall I give my growing boy and girl? At the close of each chapter are suggestive reading lists, arranged by subject. In the appendix is a purchase list of books for children and young people.

Teachers who are searching for stories to tell and books to read aloud to pupils, will save time by consulting *STORIES*, edited by Mary Gould Davis. This list is based upon the experiences of the story-tellers in the New York Public Library for the past twenty years. Each story listed has the source given and oftentimes there is a short annotation about the type of story and its appeal. "Stories for

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## SOME LESSONS WE MAY LEARN FROM THE TEACHERS OF FRANCE

RENÉ HARDRÉ AND PHILIP L. HARRIMAN

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FRENCH BOYS and girls are no more intelligent than are their contemporaries in this country, yet they attain to a far higher degree of mastery in their language than do American boys and girls. So eminent a teacher as Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch has expressed a desire that by some means English might be taught as effectively in England as French is in France. No doubt, the efficacy of the methods employed by our colleagues in France may be exaggerated; still the fact remains that we can learn much from a study of practices employed in the elementary schools of France to bring young people to express themselves well. Any thorough study of how composition is taught in that country brings one to the conviction that the reputation of the French teacher's skill is well merited.

According to the most recent official instructions, the French pupil should participate in five distinct types of activities in his acquisition of powers of expression. In the first place, the child is required to do a great deal of memory work. Even in the first, or preparatory grade, he must learn by heart a relatively large amount of material. The idea is that through memorization lessons the child not only learns to appreciate good literature, but also acquires a knowledge of correct usage in language. Of course, the instructions warn the teacher that material beyond the comprehension of the class must be avoided, but they do insist that all material chosen for the children to learn be of genuine worth. Since the rhythm of poetry is of aid in recalling the sequence of words, the material selected for learning by very young school children is melodious verse. In the upper grades both prose and poetry are memorized. To such lessons one period a week is devoted.

As a result of this very exacting training the French children soon master the technique of memorizing easily. Foreign visitors to their schools are amazed to hear one child after another quote passages from standard writers, no one repeating quotations given by another. By means of this activity the child acquires a tremendous advantage over his contemporary here, for we have no systematic training of this type. Nowhere do we find all the teachers of a community united to have their classes memorize at least once a week during every year of the elementary school worthwhile selections from literature. If we could form such a policy, no doubt our children would acquire a sense of correct and idiomatic usage in English, and consequently we might dispense with much of our teaching of grammar for correct usage.

Secondly, each day, the official instructions advise, one period should be devoted to vocabulary building. It must be clearly understood that the teacher is not advised to attempt the task of hoisting words into the mind of a child by the employment of some curious pedagogical machinery. On the contrary, in the first grade the child is taught only the terms which designate things thoroughly familiar to him. The teacher acts out the meanings wherever possible, for the official instructions take cognizance of the fact that for a child the behavior context of a word gives its meaning. In the next grade the child learns the new words he meets in his readers. One must remember that this instruction is not given haphazardly, but is one very definite part of the logically organized program to bring children to a thorough mastery of their language. In the middle form the teacher is advised to emphasize the acquisition of synonyms for familiar words and to



instruct children in the families of words. At no time does the elementary-school teacher indulge in pedantry, subtlety, or etymological research in his classes; against such uninteresting and fruitless practices the teacher is cautioned. It is of interest to note that the instructions warn the teacher against making vocabulary studies dull and tedious.

We have thus far made but sporadic attempts to enlarge the vocabularies of our pupils; we have no uniform plan about the matter. Perhaps we feel that through wide reading the pupil will come to add new words to his stock and to employ them on the proper occasions. In France, however, there are systematic lessons in vocabulary, and the superior language tradition which one finds in that country may be due in no small measure to regular instruction in words. Such teaching could easily become profitless if it were made routine or perfunctory. It should proceed logically and simply. Certainly, one cannot pour new words into a child's vocabulary; they must be planted there. In the lower grades the children should be taught the names of things which they may see about them. Through excursions, which are common in French schools and which are too infrequent in this country, the teacher and her class may obtain lists of words for daily vocabulary-building exercises. In the higher grades words with little or no behavior context may be introduced from the reading material. In no event should one try to force words into a pupil's vocabulary by having the class acquire a group of four or five words written on the blackboard before the class enters the room. That plan has no psychological justification.

3 Since French grammar and spelling are so closely related they are taught together. Grammar is not taught for its own sake, but for the value it has in giving boys and girls facility in using their language. As in America there was a strong reaction against the subject a few years ago, but, as here, teachers are finding it absolutely essential in training their pupils. Hence the latest official instructions urge that grammar be taught, but that

it be functional, not formal, grammar. Since the French teachers are so seriously concerned about teaching standard usages, and hence with extirpating provincialism and colloquialisms, grammar finds an honored position in the elementary-school curriculum.

That we cannot dispense with grammar without experiencing dire results has been ably pointed out. If we hope to teach boys and girls to write and speak clear, idiomatic English we must teach grammar: there is no escape. The day of parsing is happily gone forever. When all grammar was thrown bodily out of most of our schools a couple of decades ago, much trash was discarded; but along with the formalized, useless matter was discarded much of indispensable worth. From the very first grade, grammar must be taught, not as a separate study, but as a vital, coherent part of the program for bringing pupils to some degree of mastery over their language. When the study is begun in the sixth or seventh grade, if it is started at all, as a separate course, both teachers and pupils look upon it as something "tacked on" to the course of study, as something really having no relation to writing or speaking. Nowadays when a college teacher warns students against beginning all sentences with the subjects and advises them to use other elements, only rarely does ten percent of his class know what he means. In discarding grammar we have rejected an essential activity.

4 For one period each day oral composition receives attention in the elementary schools of France. At first the children are led to repeat or sum up what they have just heard. Little by little they are encouraged to express themselves more freely. Although one must realize that the training in oral composition in France is not at all mechanical and formalized, yet he must at the same time understand that the teacher there tries to guide the pupils into speaking well. Consequently he spends much time in preparing for the lesson period in oral composition and considers the lesson itself to be a vital part of the program for teaching the language to his pupils.

The teaching of French in the elementary



5 schools of France, it will be observed, is coherently organized from the preparatory grade of the primary school on through the lycees. Perhaps in no other type of activity in teaching English here do we evidence our lack of any such unified, well organized plan as in the way we conduct lessons in oral composition. We ought to plan for them very carefully and to make them fit in with our whole plan for imparting mastery over the use of English. Our failures with oral composition, from which activity so much was expected ten years ago, are largely due to the haphazard way we conduct our lessons in it. If we start by having the class relate short anecdotes, we may lead them to see that every good piece of composition, oral or written, should arrive definitely at a point and stop there. By devoting greater care to the preparation of lessons in oral composition, we may be able to accomplish much. Thus far we have done but little.

Concerning the subject to which all these other activities lead—written composition—the official instructions give excellent advice to the French teacher. "In general any method is bad if it does not inspire the child with a desire to translate his impressions and for that translation to seek adequate expression. Any method is good which inspires him with that double desire. A plan is excellent when that desire grows into a passion or enthusiasm. Now, no one feels a need for translating his impressions if he does not feel them keenly. It is important then, that a child's impressions be sharp." It is further stated that any subject which intensifies the pupils' impressions helps in the teaching of French. The French pupils are taught from the first grade to observe carefully, training in that matter being made an integral part of the instruction. Furthermore, the writing of themes on what has been observed holds a very important position in the French schools. Indeed, all the work in the other activities mentioned is regarded as futile if it does not result in improvement in the powers of written expression. The importance attached to written composition in

France attracts the attention of foreign observers.

In this country we simply have not succeeded in teaching boys and girls to write decent English. One has but to note the standard educational tests to discover how little improvement is made from year to year. When the results of such a test as the *Pressey Diagnostic Tests* are placed upon the *Otis Universal Percentile Graph*, one may readily comprehend how little advance is made from year to year in teaching the first principles of English usage. The reasons for our lack of success are that our population is heterogeneous as compared with that of France, that we have abandoned the teaching of grammar, that we have attempted to do too much with a single set of themes, and that we have not required enough writing of short papers on topics familiar to the pupils.

Lacking any directions from an authority centralized in a ministry of public instruction, each of us has gone his own way. The consequence is that in some places the teaching of composition has been effective, whereas in others but few themes are required. We make no attempt to develop uniformly the ability to express well, in standard English, oral or written, comparatively simple ideas. For the lack of any coherent, uniform program we may be partly excused on the ground of the heterogeneity of our population.

Since schools in America are democratic institutions, attended by throngs who seldom hear correct speech at home, we must teach a sensible type of grammar if we would achieve results in composition. In a former generation when the hoi polloi were excluded from the benefits of schooling, teachers might well have dispensed with the subject, for pupils would have acquired an ear for correctness. Without grammar the sentence sense, variety in sentence structure, and the rules of punctuation remains incomprehensible. They simply cannot be taught except through grammar—of the right sort.

The famous report on *The Teaching of English* in England points out that teachers try to accomplish too much with one set of

themes. Errors are to be extirpated by taking them seriatim. To mark every mistake in a theme is to waste time and to confuse the pupil. The teacher should attack errors by noting only a few at a time. One should commence, of course, with the grosser violations and proceed only by slow degrees to the refinements. Here again our problem is highly complicated by the fact that we have no national course of study, as the French have; hence each of us continues to see his problems from a limited point of view and to be unfamiliar with the relative importance of usages. We need to pray, as did a departed college president, "O Lord, give us a just sense of relative values."

The reason for the comparative neglect into which the writing of themes has fallen is the result of large classes and many demands upon the teachers. It is easy enough for a critic of our schools to cavil against the slighting of written work, but he has no knowledge of the elementary-school teachers' problems. Yet, perhaps, no other activity needs more attention than written composition. The dread it possesses for teachers is not well founded, for it rests upon the assumption that compositions must be read word for word and that every error should be noted. As pointed out, such a treatment is wrong. We may well afford to overlook minutiae for the time being. Furthermore, we have not yet applied the idea of positive teaching to the problem of composition; we have been too content with negative instruction. Rightly taught, written

composition becomes a joy both to pupils and to the teacher. Themes should be written not for the teacher to blue-pencil, but for the authors to read to their classmates. Children should be allowed to experience the joys of sharing experiences with their fellows by reading aloud in the classroom what they have written about familiar things.

Finally, the French teacher does not deal with these five types of activity as separate, discrete topics; rather are all grouped about what he terms "the center of interest for the week." For instance, during the first week of the fall term the center of interest may naturally be the re-opening of schools. The pupils are lead to observe the school bags of their friends and the calendar, the companions and the familiar scenes of the school. Around such topics all the lessons may be unified and organized.

Perhaps it may be possible for us to adapt the best methods used in France to the conditions found in this country. That the merits are many, no one who makes a study of the teaching of French in France will deny. Where we find chaotic, haphazard methods for the teaching of English in our elementary schools, in France we find a thorough, well organized plan enforced all over the nation to bring pupils to have command of their language. At least we must emulate the French teacher in one respect: He is not afraid to make the study of language so exacting and thorough that his work commands the wholesome respect of his pupils.

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## POETRY - A HAPPY EXPERIENCE IN TEACHING

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THE FORCED memorization of poetry is still stressed too persistently in our schools. In the high school and the college, it results too often in a mechanical feat, performed because of an approaching test or examination. As such it has enormous possibilities of evil, and but little of good. Often the love for verse is stifled and thus sacrificed for the good of a few poems, usually selected by the teacher and thus perhaps of little interest to the student.

In the elementary school, there should be but little necessity for memorizing poetry. If the child likes a poem a great deal, and lives with it normally, without the obvious and often false insistence of pedagogy, he will learn the poem. At least, he will learn the parts that, in his present moment, are appealing. It is truly amazing how much poetry an imaginative child will acquire, if he is placed in an environment where the stimuli are healthy and tactful.

Although a child should never be forced to memorize a poem, he should be encouraged to do it for himself. That is, he should realize the value of making his own a poem he loves. Teachers must ever strive to make excellent things appear as excellent things, and this is certainly one.

There should be a poetry period for each class in the elementary school. It must not, however, be conducted with the usual class room procedure, the holding up of hands, the questions and answers, and the assignment. Instead, it should be a gathering of people who are to read and discuss poetry, perhaps also to write it. It should be purely an explorative experience, with no thoughts of test or examinations. With the aid of the teacher, the children should develop the best way of reading. Without the reiterative correction, a skilful teacher can make them see that a

reader must watch punctuation marks, must feel the "flow" of the verse, and, if he desires success, must refrain from using the absurd tones and gestures of the elocutionist. He must read with the natural voice, somewhat subdued, and attempt to interpret the poem by his own restrained emotions.

At this meeting the children should be given opportunities for reciting the poems they know, or even parts of them. But the reasons for liking the selections should never be stressed. Very few children know why they like a certain poem, and there is no reason why they should. The insistence on such explanations is as absurd as forcing a student to tell why he likes chocolate pie or apples.

If a child is to memorize a poem, he should do it as a whole, never line by line. He should read the poem over carefully several times, concentrating all the time. Then he should close the book and recite *aloud*, beginning, of course, with the first line. When he comes to the first halting place, he should open the book and read aloud the next lines. Then he should begin with the first line again, and go as far as possible. If this method is continued, very soon the child will know the poem as a whole, not as disconnected lines. Even long poems such as "The Highwayman" and "The Bridge" should be memorized as wholes. I have often been surprised to see how many times the children would announce at my meetings that they wanted to recite poems of unusual length. The pride in accomplishing difficult feats (which should be encouraged, of course), was perhaps the outstanding reason.

Every young child should be encouraged in making his own poetry anthology. In it he may copy lines, verses or poems which he likes, as well as paste in it printed verse, pictures, or biographical sketches. If, how-



ever, this is given as an assignment, to be accomplished by a given date, it becomes for many no more than a mechanical book-making job. Instead, it should be a gradual growth, an accumulation of treasures liked by the child. It is often much better to have them made at school.

One of my happiest experiences in teaching was the making of anthologies with an eighth grade class. Just at the beginning of school, the evening paper started printing each day a poem which people loved. Often the story of the writing (not by any means always accurate, however) accompanied it. We watched eagerly each new edition. There was a grand uproar when "Abou Ben Adhem," which they detested, was given as a "greatly loved" poem. But later there were many favorites, "He Fell Among Thieves," "Daffodils," "Spanish Waters," "Little Giffen," and "The Ballad of East and West," printed in full and ready for the pasting. Later we bound the anthologies in class, then covered them with attractive cloth and lettered the names on the covers. One boy said he wanted to make a collection of poems asked for by readers of

the weekly "Query Box." It would show, he naïvely told us, just which were the greatest poems. When it was completed, he had a most significant anthology, but one that contained, he soon found, almost nothing of the "great."

We cannot afford to neglect the teaching of poetry with our young children. So much is accomplished by it, if taught by a tactful, enthusiastic (but not too enthusiastic) teacher. Among many other fine things, it is perhaps the surest way of developing taste. I have not yet seen an adult with a matured growth in poetry who did not have also excellent taste in prose. I have never known a poet who did not also write beautiful prose. Everything learned in poetry may be carried over into prose. But the other side of it is not always true, perhaps seldom true. I know many adults possessed of the most discriminating judgment in prose, whose growth has been achieved almost entirely by prose, yet who have the most abominable taste in poetry. They enjoy to the full the subtle niceties of Henry James, Conrad and Meredith, but, for their poets, are easily satisfied with the jingles of Kipling or the prettiness of Alfred Noyes.

## RECENT GUIDE-POSTS TO JUVENILE LITERATURE

(Continued from page 194)

the Story Hour," "Stories for the Older Boys and Girls," and "Hero Stories" make up the complete list. The foreword states that the editions selected are those that seemed most helpful both in text and in form for the Story Hour. Each story given here has stood the test of the children's interest and approval.

The books recommended in this article have a high standard of selection. Let us hope that they may prove useful in bringing good literature to children.

### BOOKS REFERRED TO IN THIS ARTICLE

*Much Loved Books*—James O'Donnell Bennett, Boni and Liveright

*The Delight of Great Books*—John Erskine, Bobbs-Merrill

*Adventures in Reading*—May Lamberton Becker, Stokes.

*Handbook of Children's Literature*—Emelyn E. Gardner and Eloise Ramsey, Scott, Foresman

*Children's Reading*—Frances Jenkins Olcott, Houghton

*Stories; a List of Stories to Tell and to Read Aloud*, edited by Mary Gould Davis, New York Public Library

## STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF A POETRY LESSON

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THE STENOGRAPHIC lesson report will not be perfected as a recreation of a life situation until a vitaphonic machine can be used successfully. The printed page alone cannot convey smiles, tone of voice, lighting up of eyes, breathlessness, tempo nor other vital proofs of appreciation. These limitations must be kept in mind if a stenographic report is to have any value.

This report lends itself to class criticism by normal-school students. There can be free discussion, since no personal element is involved (the demonstrator being safely far away).

The usual fault of too much talking by the teacher is apparent. Other faults may be found as well as some examples of good procedure. An effort may be made to discover what elements of the lesson were planned beforehand and what grew out of the classroom situation. It should be noted that some awkwardness resulted from the fact that the teacher was demonstrating before a group of strange children, only two names being known to the teacher.

In Chapter VI of *A Prevision of Teaching*, by Warren Nevin Drum,<sup>1</sup> may be found the teacher's plan for the lesson. A comparison of the plan with the actual procedure may be an interesting basis for discussion. It is as a point of departure for class discussion that this report is offered.

The time covered by the lesson was forty-five minutes.

(Papers with mimeographed copies of two poems have been distributed.)

TEACHER: I wonder if you have good imaginations, because I want you to pretend that we know each other. I haven't had any chance to get acquainted, but let's imagine you know me real well and I know you.

<sup>1</sup> Published by Ginn and Company.

For this first poem there is one thing you need to know. The writer is an English poet, and in England they have a custom of serving afternoon tea about 5 o'clock. They stop working and have muffins and jam and tea, a little lunch. I am going to read the poem, *Milk for the Cat*.

(Reads poem by Harold Monro, from *An Anthology of Modern Verse*, published by Methuen.)

Suppose you were going to publish an illustrated edition of the poem; what lines would you choose to make pictures of?

CHILD: "The children eat and wriggle and laugh,  
The two old ladies stroke their silk."

TEACHER: Can you see that picture? (Repeats lines) Who else can find a line that you would draw a picture of?

CHILD: "She has come in merely to blink by the grate."

TEACHER: What does *grate* mean?

CHILD: A place where they have a fire.

TEACHER: Can you see the cat sitting by the fire? Who else can find another line?

CHILD: "The white saucer like some full moon descends."

TEACHER: Act that out.<sup>2</sup> Pretend this is the saucer. (Child uses paper and acts the line.

Do you think the old lady gave it to the cat?

CHILD: Yes.

CHILD: No, I think the children gave it to the cat.

TEACHER: The poem doesn't say, does it? Either might be right. Have you another line that would be good to make a picture of?

CHILD: "She nestles over the shining rim,  
Buries her chin in the creamy sea."

TEACHER: Can you see that picture? Is

<sup>2</sup> Was this a wise question?

there any other line you would like?

CHILD: "Draws and dips her body to heap  
Her sleepy nerves in the great  
armchair."

TEACHER: Does that complete the picture?

CHILD (Continues): "Lies defeated and  
buried deep  
Three or four hours  
unconscious there."

TEACHER: That finishes the description.  
Can you see the cat lying in the armchair?  
Are there any lines you like the sound of?

CHILD: "She sighs and dreams and thrills  
and glows  
Transfigured with love."

TEACHER: Can you read it so that it sounds  
like what it says? (Child reads.) That is  
pretty good.

CHILD: "Then she stamps her claws or lifts  
her ears  
Or twists her tail and begins to  
stir."

TEACHER: Is there any one line in those  
four that you like best?

CHILD: No; I like them all.

TEACHER: They all go together. I like par-  
ticularly that last line:

"One breathing, trembling purr." Any  
other line? (No response.)

I'll give you one; it has been given before:  
"She nestles over the shining rim." It sounds  
just like what the cat does when she buries  
her chin in the creamy sea. In the third  
stanza will you notice the last two lines and  
see how they show the difference between the  
meaning of the word *glance* and the word  
*gaze*?

"And her independent, casual glance  
Becomes a stiff, hard gaze."

What is the difference between glancing at  
somebody and gazing at him?

CHILD: In glancing you just look at them  
and in gazing you stare at them.

TEACHER: That's good. I think he has told  
it exactly right. In the next stanza. Why does  
the poet say, "Till her tongue has curled the  
last holy drop"? Why does he use the word  
*holy*?

CHILD: I think he uses the word *holy* be-  
cause it is their custom.

TEACHER: When you say *their* do you mean  
the people?

CHILD: Yes.

TEACHERS But what is this talking about?

CHILD: About the cat.

TEACHER: I think the poet is talking about  
the cat and her feeling, rather than about the  
people. What do you think?

CHILD: I think it is the very thing the cat  
lives for, and she isn't satisfied until she gets  
the last drop.

TEACHER: That is probably what the cat  
feels, but why does the poet say *holy*?

CHILD: She only gets it once a day.

TEACHER: I'm not sure about that.

CHILD: The cat loves the milk so well that  
it seems holy.

TEACHER: And the word *holy* means that to  
you. I think that it means that the cat likes  
milk the way we care about things in our  
religion; our religion is sacred to us, and to  
the cat the milk is sacred.<sup>2</sup> Several of you  
almost had that idea. Are there any words  
you need to understand to enjoy the poem  
better?

CHILD: Ecstasy.

TEACHER: Can anyone explain what ecstasy  
is? (No response.) It is an extreme emotion,  
an extreme feeling. The poet says that the  
cat has this extreme feeling. We have another  
word that means nearly the same thing—  
rapture. Any other word?

I think you understand most of it. Listen  
to the poem again and see if it means more  
to you this time. (Reads poem.)

On the next page is another very different  
poem about a cat. Perhaps this time you'll  
prefer to listen without looking at the paper.  
You may look at it later. This poem is called  
*The Tom-Cat* (by Don Marquis in *The Poetry  
Book*, grade nine, by Huber, Brunner, Curry)  
(Reads poem)

I want to see if you understand one or two  
things about it. In the first stanza why does  
it say, "And he chants the hate of a million  
years"? You will have to think about that

<sup>2</sup> Obviously the teacher got in too deep and struggled badly  
in getting out.



to understand it. Do you know what it means? (speaking to a child with his hand up)

CHILD: I think it means that he was out at that hour of night and no one likes a cat purring like that.

TEACHER: What does "the hate of a million years" mean?

CHILD: People never did like to have him out at night.

TEACHER: Do you know who does the hating in this line? It is the tom-cat that hates? Do you know what it means?

CHILD: When a tom-cat yells at night it sounds as though he is giving way to his anger. (Showing how he yells)

TEACHER: Then you think the hate of a million years means the amount of the yells or chants?

CHILD: The cat has been hunted for a million years and always has hated the white person.

TEACHER: That's very good. That really is the meaning. It is the hate of all the cat families before him.

In the third stanza, next to the last line, "And he sings to the stars of the jungle nights Ere cities were, or laws"—what does that mean?

CHILD: That means he was singing to the stars about when he was in the jungle, before cities were even started.

TEACHER: Was this tom-cat ever in the jungle?

CHILD: I think his descendants were.

TEACHER: You mean—What?

CHILDREN (in chorus) Ancestors.

TEACHER: Were the same stars in the jungle?

CHILD: The stars are just the same as those his ancestors sang to.

TEACHER: What does the next line mean? Do you know the meaning of the word *primeval*?

CHILD: It means a lonely woods or lonely place where nobody lives.

TEACHER: *Primeval* doesn't mean just that.

CHILD: *Primeval* means ancient or long ago.

TEACHER: (nodding) It really means primitive, but that is another word you may not

know—early times. It comes from two Latin words *primus*, meaning first, and *aevum* meaning age: the first age, long, long, ago. Really all these words I have been asking you about give the same idea, that the tom-cat descended from a long line of ancestors that were beasts of the jungle. Is there another word to use for cat, a related animal?

CHILD: Tiger.

TEACHER: It might also be called *tiger*. Will you look for words that show action? Look through the poem from the beginning and as you tell me, say the word to sound like the action.

SEVERAL CHILDREN: Chants—swing—comes

TEACHER: That doesn't show action so clearly.

CHILDREN: Twists—crouches

TEACHER: (to last speaker) Make it sound like the action.<sup>4</sup>

CHILD: I can't.

TEACHER: Who can?

CHILD: Crouch.

TEACHER: Come up in front and show us what a crouching action would be. How does an animal crouch or a boy crouch in a foot ball game? When the football is going to be played, don't some of the players crouch to receive it?

CHILD: They stoop down like an animal that's going to leap.

TEACHER: You are describing it well; can't you show us the action a little?

CHILD: I can with a football. (Shows action)

TEACHER: I thought maybe you could do it. I thought you could say the word so it would sound like that. Who wants to try it? Crouch—does that sound like it; You can make it sound that way. I tried to do it when I read the poem, who'll try it? Does *crouch* sound like it? Who can make it sound like that? Do you want to try it? (to boy in back seat)

CHILD: Twists and crouches.

CHILD: Crouches.

<sup>4</sup> This led to much unforeseen difficulty. It was no part of the plan to take so much time over one action word. This part is very much overdone.

TEACHER: Should you say it as rapidly as that?

CHILD: (in stealthy tone.) Crouches.

TEACHER: That was more successful. Another action?

SEVERAL CHILDREN: Bares—sings—leaping—leers.

TEACHER: Do you know what that means?

CHILD: Sort of a jest, making fun of.

TEACHER: That's good. It is a sly look. If you leer at somebody you're not looking at him very pleasantly. Can you say that the way it should sound, sly and unpleasant? Who wants to try it, and also express the idea that's in the next line? Who'll try it?

CHILD: Leers.

TEACHER: Maybe you can get it better by reading the lines.

CHILD: "When the blotched red moon leers  
over the roofs

Give voice to their scorn of man."

TEACHER: That's good. The next words?

CHILDREN: Lie—lick—veil—play—purr—  
wail—beat—swing.

TEACHER: Do you see how powerful these words are in making a picture? Each one tells a different thing. Altogether we have a picture of the way the cat is acting. Whoever can draw the cat in all its different poses is an artist. The action words make the picture live, make it alive. I'm going to begin with the third stanza and read three stanzas. If you say the words so that the sound will be like the meaning of the words—(reads stanzas)—that's almost like a motion picture, isn't it? Can you beat the time for the demon's song? (reads last stanza) who will read it, beating the time for the demon's songs?

CHILD: (reading) "But at midnight in the  
alley

He will crouch again  
and wail,

And beat the time for  
his demon's song

With the swing of his  
demon's tail."

TEACHER: You got the swing of it well. Who will volunteer to read the whole poem?

I don't think there are any words you can't pronounce. Won't you volunteer to do it? Raise your hand if you are willing to try. (Boy offers). Come up to the front of the class. (Reads) Good. Which of these two poems would be easier to memorize?

CHILD: The last one.

TEACHER: Why?

CHILD: It is more interesting.

TEACHER: That is a good reason for its being easier to memorize. I am not sure that I like it better.

CHILD: It has time to it and you can memorize it that way.

TEACHER: The other has time to it also. What is the difference in time?

CHILD: This is more quick.

CHILD: This takes place at midnight. The other was in the daytime.<sup>5</sup>

TEACHER: I don't think that is a reason for being able to memorize this.

CHILD: This is more simple.

TEACHER: How do you think this poem is more simple?

CHILD: The words and the verses are easier to understand.

TEACHER: I don't think the meaning is any simpler, but the wording is.

CHILD: I think it has an awful lot of action in it and if you think of what the cat is doing you can almost memorize it from the action.

TEACHER: You might try that. Here is another question. Do you think one of the other grades would like to hear one of these poems?

CHILD: I think they would like them both.

TEACHER: Do you like both or only the last?

CHILD: I like both. They are the same but different.

TEACHER: They are about the same animal but the poems themselves are different. Here is a suggestion you might like to try. You might have a reading contest and find out which one reads the poems best and have that person read the poems to another grade.

Here's another suggestion: read them in assembly. Would you now like to read the

(Continued on page 211)

<sup>5</sup> Should the teacher have stopped to clear up this confusion as to the meanings of the word *time*? Should she have offered an explanation of rhythm?

## REMINISCENT LITERATURE

CLARISSA MURDOCH

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W H. HUDSON in *FAR AWAY AND LONG AGO* remarks: "It is difficult, impossible I am told, for anyone to recall his childhood exactly as it was. It could not have been what it seems to the adult mind, since we cannot escape from what we are, however great our detachment may be; and in going back we must take our present selves with us. Another difficulty in the way of those who write of their childhood is that unconscious artistry will steal or sneak in to erase unseemly lines and blots, to retouch, and colour, and shade and falsify the picture."

Admitting the truth of this, it is still possible for lovers of children to enjoy several recent books in which the authors have written with sincerity of their childhood. *TAR* by Sherwood Anderson will be a surprise to those who think of Anderson as obsessed with sex, for in this story he has written with understanding and sympathy of a small boy's life in a little Ohio town years ago. As to how much is fiction and how much a story of his own life the reader is left to guess. In his foreword Mr. Anderson says that several times he started to write of actual events in his own childhood, but each time was deterred by fear of what his relatives would say. It was not until he created the image of little Tar that he could write freely.

The story is of a poor family of the Middle West, seen through the eyes of a child. There are several characters. Very well done is that of Dick Moorehead, the shiftless father, always bragging, never sticking very long to a job, always moving from town to town. The sympathy between Tar and his Italian mother is beautifully shown. There are no startling events in the story, but bit by bit there is painted a vivid picture of the section of society that this author most delights in studying.

"The Mooreheads were poor and were getting poorer every year but that Tar did not know. He did not ask himself why his mother he thought so beautiful had but one good dress and walked while another woman rode in a carriage, why the Mooreheads lived in a small house through the cracks of which the snow sifted during the winter, while others were in warm brightly lighted houses."

There are several descriptions of experiences that Tar had in the woods and fields when he felt that "he had got into a world in which he could move freely about, in which he could live freely and happily." One Sunday the boy went into the corn field, made a fire and thought about God. "Nice sounds at night by an old orchard and a corn field too, about the best sound you can hear. The crickets are going it and frogs and the grasshoppers. There is a lot to think about you never can really think about. If you talk about God to a boy he gets all mixed up." After his fire burned out Tar went home. It was dark when he got there but it did not matter. "If your mother has any sense she knows enough to know that certain days are certain days. If you do what she doesn't expect on such a day she never says a word."

Mary Moorehead dies and the story ends when Tar, conquering his sobs, grabs his bundle of newspapers and races up the street to sell them.

John G. Bowman, in a small volume, *THE WORLD THAT WAS*, has written of another small boy in much the same sort of group. In this case, though the poverty is similar, the father is of another kind, one who can understand a boy's thoughts and actions. This family, too, is often on the move. There is a lovely description of the feeling the boy had for a small mulberry tree that he owned. One moving day it was left behind and when the family arrived at the new home, the father



saw that his little son was very dejected. Skillful questioning brought out the fact that he missed his mulberry tree. So the wise father immediately took the child back and they carefully dug up the beloved tree and transplanted it.

The primeval prairie had a great fascination for the child and he spent hours in the open, studying the birds, insects, flowers, till he fairly soaked up its beauty and discovered its rhythm. He spent so much time there that the family called him lazy and his father promised him a bicycle if he would do his share of the chores. But to give up his precious free hours was too great a price to pay, and he refused. He tried to run away but, like most small runaways, returned at night, and finding the family away read Poe's *The Raven* till he was so terrified that he tumbled into bed, pulled the covers over his head, and finally fell asleep. In the morning when his father found him and questioned him the whole story came tumbling out, with the result that the father told the family, "This boy is not lazy, let him do as likes." It is a slender little volume to hold so much beauty.

While *FAR AWAY AND LONG AGO* by W. H. Hudson is not a new book, E. P. Dutton & Co. published a new edition two years ago. It is so unusual a childhood that the English naturalist described that one can reread it with pleasure. One of the most interesting episodes is the long walk he took in the plains as a child of six. He was thrilled at the sight of numbers of birds and was "amazed and enchanted" at the sight of three "immensely tall white and rose coloured birds. The wings when open were of a glorious crimson color, and the bird was to me the most angel-like creature on earth." He afterwards saw flamingoes hundreds of times but he declares, "the delight in them has never equalled in degree that which I experienced on this occasion when I was six years old."

He acquired the habit of going about alone very early. His mother did not tell him till later how it worried her. She would follow him and watch him standing motionless. This bothered her until she found he was "watching

some living thing, an insect perhaps, but oftener a bird—a pair of little scarlet fly catchers building a nest of lichen on a peach tree, or some such beautiful thing."

It is a long way from the pampas of South America where Hudson played as a boy to *MARBACKA*, the home of Selma Lagerlöf when she was a little girl. She has given us a charming picture of the family life of prosperous people in Sweden years ago. The first chapter dealing with Back-Kaisa, the nurse-maid is one of the best. Back-Kaisa was "strong, patient, dutiful. She was a person to be depended upon. If only she'd had a more delicate touch she would have been admirable. But hers were no gentle clutches when little arms had to go into dress sleeves. When she washed the children the soap always got into their eyes; and when she wielded the comb they felt as if every wisp of hair were being torn from their heads."

There is a good description of the way fears may be implanted in children's minds. Over the nursery was a loft in which there lived an owl. "At night that owl made a dreadful racket. To the children's ears it sounded as if someone were rolling big heavy logs over their heads. The former nurse-maid used to laugh at them when they were frightened by the noise, and say there was nothing to be scared about—it was only the owl. But Back-Kaisa, who hailed from the forest, was afraid of all animals, furred and feathered. They were to her like evil spirits. So, whenever she was awakened in the night by the owl she would take out her prayer book and begin to read. Indeed she could not soothe the children; on the contrary, she terrified them so that the poor little owl grew into a huge monster with tiger-claws and eagle-wings. No words can picture how they lay shuddering to the very roots of their being at the thought of having a horrible ogre like that right above them. What if it should tear a hole through the ceiling with its great claws, and come swooping down."

Kenneth Graham, the English writer, is well known for his delightful essays about children and his stories for them. In *WIND*

IN THE WILLOWS, he has written an animal story, far superior to the stories of the bedtime variety. This book is full of the beauty of the English country-side and it is evident that the author knew and loved it as a child. Here in America Carl Sandburg has written *ROOTABAGA STORIES* and *ROOTABAGA PIGEONS*, highly imaginative stories for young children. These are saturated with the same sort of feeling for the prairies that Graham has for England. He knows, too, what things children imagine and also much about their sense of humor, which is often based upon exaggeration. Many of the *ROOTABAGA STORIES* illustrate these points. One of the best is "The Haystack Cricket." This is a story an old man tells his daughter one November day as he sits "where the sun shines against the boards of a corn crib." "This time of the year, when the mouse in the fields whispers so I can hear him, I remember one November when I was a boy. One night in November when the harvest moon was shining and stacking gold corn-shocks in the sky, I got lost. Instead of going home I was going away from home." He came to a haystack where a yellow and gold cricket was singing. "And he told me, this cricket did, he told me when he listened soft if everything was still in the grass and the sky, he could hear golden crickets singing in the corn-shocks the harvest moon had stacked in the sky." He took a trip with the cricket and they went to the moon towns. "This time of year I always remember that November," said the old man to his daughter Sky Blue.

Those who believe that children should have much free play close to nature will be interested in reading these books to see how much importance these writers attach to the influence of nature upon young children. Little Tar studying an ant-hill, Hudson marveling at the beauty of the flamingoes, Bowman and Sandburg enthusiastically responding to the chorus of the prairies, are children enjoying a precious heritage.

*THE LITTLE LONG AGO* by Laura Spencer Porter shows little people in a happy family, a prosperous, well educated group, far differ-

ent from the "poor-whites" in Tar. Here are aunts, uncles, nurses, all seen through childish eyes. The author has a keen sympathy for children and writes with great charm of their funny little ways. In "Enrichment" she tells how she saw a large muster of butterflies and asked her mother where they were going. "To a christening," replied her mother. "Presently I go back to my digging. Later we go indoors. I am to be dressed for dinner. But I bring with me the memory of the christening as actual as the spade in my hand; real treasure—and I have, from then until now in all these years, never lost it. I still know, and could tell any child, how lovely it would be to be present at a butterfly christening."

The children had a beloved book, "The Household Book of Poetry." It meant so much to them in their early days that she says, "If I had a child for whom to furnish a house, I think perhaps I would first of all buy for him a book of poetry. For though I remember much poetry, and can sing many old songs and rhymes, yet I do not remember enough."

Children sing, "The last is best of all the game." So loved in many nurseries is A. A. Milne that he, Christopher Robin, and Pooh are almost a part of the family. The much worn volumes of *WHEN WE WERE VERY YOUNG*, *NOW WE ARE SIX*, and *WINNIE, THE POOH*, on the book shelves speak eloquently of happy hours. Mr. Milne has an uncanny ability to express feelings that a toddler is too inarticulate to describe. "On the Stairs" shows this. He delights in portraying children in their dramatic moments. Some of the best poems relate to a child's keenness in detecting insincerity in an adult. "Come out With Me" with its refrain,

"Run along, run along,

Everyone says, run along, there's a little darling.

If I am a little darling, why don't they run with me?"

will bring a guilty feeling to many a mother.

The books mentioned in this article are not the only ones dealing with this important subject. They are a few of the best that have been published of late, and may serve as a

(Continued on page 224.)

## AN EXPERIMENT WITH A DIARY IN THE FIFTH GRADE

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AT THE FIRST English conference held with the training school teachers of the fifth grade last September, two main objectives were suggested for the year's work in composition—improvement in sentence structure, and enlargement of vocabulary. These objectives seemed vital because the sentence is the standard unit of measurement of all composition exercises, and because the accuracy and forcefulness of a pupil's expression are commensurate with his choice of words. It was the consensus of opinion at this opening meeting that if the teachers were to strive for correct and effective English during the year, they would likely achieve the best results by a series of well organized lessons in which sentence building and word study received their proper emphasis.

At first thought such objectives appeared vague, and the ways and means to the end equally obscure. How to establish personal relations with the pupils, how to make both oral and written composition as practical as possible, and how to interest the pupils in the main objectives of the year became the chief problems for solution. From past experience the teachers realized how futile much of the composition work had been and how uninteresting were many of the exercises usually given in the text.

The suggestions of a diary as a means of vitalizing written English in the fifth grade met with the approval of the training teacher,<sup>1</sup> who started the project as early in the term as possible. She decided to experiment with the diary as the center of written exercises, but planned to let it interfere in no way with the regular language lessons outlined in the English syllabus and text.

In the first lessons the pupils talked about the great men in history who had kept diaries. The teacher led them to see the signifi-

cance of these records to the men who wrote them and to men of later times. She brought into the discussion also the names of some contemporary Americans who have written diaries worthy of publication. The facts presented proved so interesting to the pupils that they became enthusiastic about writing diaries themselves.

At first the pupils felt that they had nothing in their lives worth recording, but they thought differently when told that any subjects in which they were vitally interested, especially those intimately concerned with their daily lives, were suitable.

Such topics as these were suggested by the teacher or pupils themselves during the preliminary discussion:

1. Scenes observed on the way to and from school
2. News of the town
3. News of the Sunday School and Church
4. Playground activities and recreation hours
5. Automobile trips
6. Places visited after school or on Saturday
7. Parties attended
8. Movies attended
9. Interesting recitations
10. Chapel exercises
11. Visitors at school or at home
12. Current events
13. Newspaper stories
14. Accidents
15. Fires in the community
16. Work done after school

The only requirements placed upon the use of these subjects were that each writer express his own opinions about passing events and that he relate his own actual experiences. Because the pupils were to write but two or three sentences, they understood at the outset that the task would not be difficult.

<sup>1</sup>Miss Pearl Jack, training teacher in 5A, whose responsiveness and hearty co-operation made the diary a success.



An ordinary composition book might have been used for the diaries, but the making of individual cover designs gave a personal touch to the work and afforded an excellent opportunity for correlation with the art class. Each booklet had as its title, "My Diary" in large letters printed on a hand made cover.

At the beginning of each language period the teacher allowed the pupils five minutes for writing in their diaries. Sometimes they read their sentences aloud; often they laid them aside without comment at the end of the given time.

At first the teacher said little about the form of the sentences, for freedom of expression was, of course, the keynote of the exercise. Later, however, after the training teacher had examined the booklets, she made a list of the typical errors needing correction, and proceeded to enlist the children's interest in improving the quality of their work.

The pupils eventually became critical of one another's sentences when they heard the diaries read aloud. When anyone criticized a sentence adversely, he was asked to think of a better sentence to take its place, or to reconstruct it. According to Alfred Hitchcock this very act of improving a "crippled sentence" has far more important results than most teachers realize, for it develops a "constructive sense." In such a procedure are found the weighing and discarding of ideas, the testing of judgment, and the attempting of accurate statements, all of which make written composition valuable as selective thinking.

It was surprising that the mistakes revealed in the daily writing of two or three sentences should prove such a rich source of material for exercise in sentence work throughout the whole year. The following types of lessons were reported by the training teacher as part of her program in developing the sentence sense:—

1. Formal lessons in sentence building with suggested subjects and predicates.
2. The inductive lesson in presenting the parts of the sentence.
3. Exercises in the correction of incomplete sentences.

4. Exercises in the shortening of long rambling sentences, weakened by the frequent use of "and."

5. The analysis of sentences in which subjects and predicates were identified.

6. Oral composition lessons in which an effort was made to present pleasing and correct sentences.

7. Indirect teaching in which attention was called to sentence forms in other subjects.

8. Written composition lessons in which an effort was made to write pleasing and correct sentences.

Such sentences as these taken at random from the diaries written in September and October show the types most frequently used early in the term:

1. Monotonous sentences all beginning in the same way
  - a. "I got an invitation to a Hallowe'en party today."
  - b. "I had my good coat lined today."
  - c. "I am making a report in geography today."
  - d. "I am going to Ohio for Thanksgiving."
2. Sentence fragments
  - a. "Went to a show tonight."
  - b. "Planned for Hallowe'en."
  - c. "Came to school happy."
3. Frequent use of the rambling compound sentence and use of "and"
  - a. "It was raining and coming home from school I got soaked and I had to change my shoes and stockings."
  - b. "I looked at my ankle and it was not swollen much and I put my weight on it."
  - c. "We went to the show and the name was 'Grass.'"

The following sentences from the same diaries written later in the term showed an effort to make sentences of a more pleasing type and a growing sentence consciousness. They also revealed more mature thinking:<sup>2</sup>—

1. Variety of beginnings
  - a. "Tomorrow I am going to play in the recital."

<sup>2</sup>See "The Teaching of English in the Secondary School"—Charles Swain Thomas. Pages 41-44.

- b. "Today is Andrew Jackson's birthday. He is remembered because he helped gain Florida."
- c. "Coming to school I fell in the mud and going home I did too."
- d. "In gym today we learned how to throw and dribble the ball."
- 2. Sentences showing the correction of the "and" habit
  - a. "This morning I found there was one little baby bird in the nest in our front porch. Tonight there were two."
  - b. "When I went home from school, my friend and I rode on my bicycle."
  - c. "After looking around I found the picture of Mozart, the German composer."

The sentence fragments noted during the first semester had almost entirely disappeared by the end of the year.

During the year the work of vocabulary building went hand in hand with sentence development and proved equally interesting to the pupils. The teacher spent much time in the examination of each child's diary for the purpose of finding out what words he used most and whether he was gaining new words from his supplementary reading and various school experiences. At first the training teacher listed the different words used by each pupil and let him see the length of the list. Later in the term the pupils themselves listed their own words from time to time and found enjoyment in the exercise. In this work the training teacher was aiming to create a word consciousness that would lead the pupils to strive for the choice of better words.

One of the most gratifying lessons relating to vocabulary training was motivated by the reading of some articles in a comparatively new magazine. In the May and June issues were published Roosevelt's Diaries<sup>3</sup> written when he was a little boy traveling with his parents in Europe. Interesting parts of these diaries were read aloud to the pupils, who proceeded at once to discuss their contents and the way in which they were written. The teacher adroitly led them to make comments

about Roosevelt's unusual sentences. They freely expressed their admiration for his writing, and were soon enumerating the well chosen words which they particularly liked. One word, especially, the word *emerge*, seemed to impress the children, because it was evidently not in their own vocabularies. They thought it better than *got out of*, which they admitted they would likely have used.

At the close of the period the teacher asked why Roosevelt could write such interesting and unusual diaries when he was only a very young boy. The children gave various answers, but finally decided that aside from Roosevelt's interesting home life and extensive travel, his great reading experience must have been the greatest reason for his large vocabulary. The period closed with an avowal on the part of the pupils to do more supplementary reading than they ever had done before, in order that, like Roosevelt, they might learn to express themselves well.

The listing of the words used in the diaries revealed a great dearth of words, especially adjectives and forceful verbs. Indeed, the pupils seemed weaker in vocabulary than in sentence structure or any mechanical skill required in composition.

The following types of lessons were later reported by the training teacher as a supplementary means of vocabulary building:

1. Exercises in the pronunciation, meaning, and use of new words met in the reading lessons.
2. Exercises in the language class in which sentences were made from suggested lists of words contributed by the class.
3. Exercises naturally growing out of the spelling lesson.
4. Lessons in the use of the dictionary.
5. Word games.
6. Lessons in which the pupils developed word consciousness as they attempted to use good words in their written work.
7. Exercises in word analysis with the study of common roots, prefixes, and suffixes.
8. The study of unusually interesting words.

<sup>3</sup>"Personality" May and June, 1928. "Roosevelt's Diaries"

## 10. Exercises in the derivation of words.

As we review the results of the year's work in 5A, we wish it were possible to measure accurately the improvement in expressional power. We do not want to claim more for the dairy than it actually accomplished. Illustrations taken from the diaries proved objectively that at the end of the term the pupils knew the meaning of the word *sentence* and that they had gained some skill in writing pleasing sentences, showing variety as well as correctness. Standard tests in sentence recognition and sentence building also helped to verify the teacher's estimate of the pupils' work, for the class stood above the median in every test.

The gains in vocabulary were less noticeable because they could not be measured objectively. Even standard tests in visual vocabulary, which usually measure a pupil's ability to recognize words, do not indicate what proportion of the words listed have become a part of his expressional stock. The acquisition of a good vocabulary is a slow process resulting from many factors in a child's home environment and school life.

Even the pupils in 5A who seemed to have

the longest list of different words did not deceive us. As Charles Swain Thomas says,<sup>3</sup> "We must not exalt the virtue of mere numbers. Collection is a relatively simple process, for it takes cognizance of the intrinsic meaning of a word—that is, what the term denotes—and ignores the extensive meaning, or what it connotes." In another part of the same discussion he says, "It is in the mastery of the connotative value of words, with their suggestive appeals to sensory effects, old memories, cherished sentiments, and buoyant fancies—it is in the skillful evoking of these wide-compassing responses to our subjective selves, that the literary artist shows his highest skill and wins his most cherished laurels."

All that the training teacher in 5A had hoped to do in vocabulary building was to create an interest in words and to develop a certain word consciousness. However, at the end of the year she was satisfied that the diary had been an effective means of arousing in the pupils a desire to increase their vocabulary and that in their daily writing most of the pupils had striven deliberately and consciously for the acquisition of new words.

<sup>3</sup> "The Teaching of English in the Secondary School." Page 40

## STENOGRAPHIC REPORT OF A POETRY LESSON

(Continued from page 204)

other poem again so that you can refresh your memory about the first one and see if there isn't something in it you like pretty well? Who'll volunteer? (Jack reads.) Jack read that very well.

I want to ask you one thing. Those of you who have a cat at home,—just keep that saucer of milk until the cat wants it pretty badly and then give it to her and watch to see how true this poem is. Won't you read the next one for us? (Child begins and stumbles over the word *malevolent*.)

TEACHER: Malevolent. We'll put this word on the board and you can look it up.

TEACHER: (after child has finished) Let's all read the last stanza, getting the sound of the word *crouch*. I didn't hear anybody making the word *wail* sound like what it means. (All read together) You could read the whole poem together and get the swing of it. Suppose you read rather softly and let my voice lead so you can get the swing of it. (All read together.) You may keep the papers if you wish.



## POSSIBLE VALUE OF FOUR SPELLING RULES

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THE VALUE of rules in the teaching of spelling has been a subject upon which opinion has differed among educational writers and experimenters, with the result that a number of experiments have been conducted in the hope of settling the problem. Turner<sup>1</sup>, Cook<sup>2</sup>, Rowland<sup>3</sup>, Wilcox<sup>4</sup>, Tone<sup>5</sup>, and many others have experimented in various ways, attempting to discover the usefulness of spelling rules. Most of the investigators state that their results are not conclusive, that what little favor or disfavor is given the use of rules is very possibly due to the method used, and that a different procedure might reverse the conclusions.

Since the question of the value of rules is not yet settled, it is very difficult to estimate what effect the proper previous teaching of rules would have upon the misspellings commonly made. A study of the misspellings of some of the words covered by frequently quoted rules, will, however, be of interest.

The present article is an outgrowth of a more extensive study of spelling errors<sup>6</sup>. In this larger investigation, eighth grade pupils, high school seniors, and college seniors were asked to spell a list of 268 of the most difficult common words. This list of 268 words contained all the words within the first 5,000 most frequently used words<sup>7</sup> which are mis-

spelled by 40 per cent or more of eighth grade pupils<sup>8</sup>.

From the many papers returned, 200 attempted spellings of each word at each of the three above mentioned grade levels were selected at random and the exact misspellings with their frequencies were tabulated. From this list of 268 words with their various misspellings, the words to which four commonly quoted rules apply were selected for the research to be described here. The rules which are quoted were taken from the appendix of the 1926 edition of the Horn-Ashbaugh Speller.<sup>9</sup> These rules are considered by the authors of the spelling text to be those having the fewest exceptions and being of greatest value for general use.

The words to which each of these four rules may be applied, together with the misspellings in which the only error is covered by the rule under which the word is listed, are given in the following tables. Following each form of misspelling is given a common fraction. The numerator of this fraction indicates the number of times this form of misspelling was found in the 200 attempted spellings at the given grade level. The denominator of the fraction indicates the total frequency of all forms of misspellings of the word which were found on the 200 papers at the given grade level.

Following each group of words, the fractional part which the listed forms of misspellings make of the total misspellings of these words is given for each grade level. This ratio is expressed in both common and decimal fractions.

The tables should be read, "The word committed was spelled committed by forty-one of the eighty-one who misspelled it on

<sup>1</sup>Turner, A. E., "Rules Versus Drill," *Journal of Educational Psychology* III (October, 1912), pp. 460-461.

<sup>2</sup>Cook, W. A., "Shall We Teach Spelling by Rule?," *Journal of Educational Psychology* III (June, 1912), pp. 316-325.

<sup>3</sup>Rowland, V. H., "The Function of Rules in Spelling," *Wyoming School Journal* XIII, pp. 243-244.

<sup>4</sup>Wilcox, M. J., *The Use of a Rule in Teaching Spelling*. Master's Thesis, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1917.

<sup>5</sup>Tone, R. L., *The Value of Rules for Teaching Derived Forms in Spelling*. Master's Thesis, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1924.

<sup>6</sup>Masters, Harry V., *A Study of Spelling Errors: A Critical Analysis of Spelling Errors Occurring in Words Commonly Used in Writing and Frequently Misspelled*. Doctor's Thesis, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1927.

For a brief account of the above see: Masters, Harry V., "A Study of Errors in Common Difficult Words: An Investigation to Determine the Types and Causes of Spelling Errors," *Elementary English Review* IV (April, 1927), pp. 113-116.

<sup>7</sup>Horn, Ernest, *A Basic Writing Vocabulary: 10,000 Words Most Commonly Used in Writing*. University Monographs in Education, First Series, No. 4, April, 1926, College of Education, University of Iowa, Iowa City.

<sup>8</sup>Ashbaugh, Ernest J., *The Iowa Spelling Scales; Their Derivation, Use, and Limitations*. Doctor's Thesis, University of Iowa, Iowa City, 1919.

<sup>9</sup>Horn, Ernest and Ashbaugh, Ernest J., *Lippincott's New Horn-Ashbaugh Speller*. J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1926.

the papers scored at the eighth grade level, by ten of the sixteen who misspelled it on the papers scored at the twelfth grade level, and by five of the fourteen who misspelled it on the papers scored at the sixteenth grade level." The data for each of the other words should be similarly interpreted.

The summary material at the bottom of the table should be read, "At the eighth grade

which the only errors are covered by the first rule." The summary material for each grade level should be read in like manner.

The total frequency of the forms of misspellings of the nine words given in the above table in which the only errors are covered by the rule, make 62.59 per cent, 75.83 per cent, and 72.13 per cent respectively, of the total misspellings of the words on the

TABLE 1  
RULE NUMBER ONE

*Words with a last syllable consisting of a single short accented vowel followed by a single consonant, double the consonant when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel.*

Grade Level				Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
committed				referring			
commited .....	41	10	5	refering .....	55	41	33
	81	16	14		85	51	36
dropped				regretted			
droped .....	25	6	7	regreted .....	45	19	11
	41	20	11		66	21	16
equipped				tonnage			
equiped .....	34	25	25	tonage .....	103	68	40
	100	48	51		152	77	44
preferred				transferred			
prefered .....	53	25	15	transferred .....	89	53	24
	80	32	19		119	62	35
referred							
refered .....	57	26	16				
	79	33	18				

Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th
Totals for words	502	273	176
which the first rule covers .....	805	360	244
Per cents for words			
which the first rule covers .....	62.59%	75.83%	72.13%

level, 502 of the total 805 misspellings, or 62.59 per cent, of the misspellings of the above words, were forms of misspellings in

papers scored at the eighth grade, high school senior, and college senior levels.

Two other words, *canceled* and *canceling*,

were in the original list of 268 words but are not included in Table 1 as they are equally correct when spelled with two *l*'s. The form using the single *l* is preferable, however. The word *cancellation*, which was also in the list of 268 words, is an exception. The frequency with which the misspelling

tendency to double the last consonant of the base form when it should not have been doubled. The form *dinning* has a frequency of eighty-seven out of a total of ninety-seven misspellings occurring on the 200 papers scored at the eighth grade level, forty-five out of forty-nine occurring on the 200 papers

TABLE 2  
RULE NUMBER TWO

*Words ending in a final silent -e, drop e before a suffix beginning with a vowel.*

I. Words ending in -ing				Grade Level		
	Grade Level			8th	12th	16th
	8th	12th	16th			
acknowledging						
acknowledgeing	1	0	0			
	64	17	10			
anticipating						
anticipateing	1	0	0			
	84	25	11			
completing						
completeing	21	10	7			
	36	13	9			
fascinating						
fascinateing	0	1	0			
	157	91	56			
rating						
rateing	22	20	2			
	56	31	22			
<b>Total for words ending in -ing covered by the second rule</b>				<b>8th</b>	<b>12th</b>	<b>16th</b>
				45	31	9
				397	177	108
<b>Per cent for words ending in -ing covered by the second rule</b>				<b>11.34%</b>	<b>17.51%</b>	<b>8.33%</b>

*cancellation* occurred at the eighth grade, high school senior, and college senior levels, was eighty out of 141, sixty-one out of seventy-four, and thirty-six out of forty-two, respectively.

There was one word in the original list, the word *dining*, in which there appeared a

scored at the high school senior level, and fifteen out of twenty-two occurring on the 200 papers scored at the college senior level. The rule as stated does not cover the addition of the suffix *-ing* to the word *dine*, but the implication would be to not double the *n*.



TABLE 2 (continued)

II. Words ending in *-ion* or *-ions*

Grade Level				Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
accommodation				congratulations			
accommodateion .....0	0	0		congratulateions .....0	0	0	
	<u>130</u>	<u>107</u>	<u>94</u>		<u>62</u>	<u>30</u>	<u>7</u>
anticipation				completion			
anticipateion .....0	0	0	0	completeion .....0	0	0	0
	<u>67</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>9</u>		<u>59</u>	<u>12</u>	<u>6</u>
Total for words ending in <i>-ion</i> or <i>-ions</i> covered by the second rule....				Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th				
	0	0	0				
	<u>318</u>	<u>175</u>	<u>116</u>				
Per cent for words ending in <i>-ion</i> or <i>-ions</i> covered by the second rule....	0	0	0				

III. Words ending in *-ous*

Grade Level				Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
continuous				ceased			
continueous .....12	1	1		ceaseed .....0	0	0	
	<u>103</u>	<u>55</u>	<u>22</u>		<u>69</u>	<u>14</u>	<u>4</u>

IV. Words ending in *-ed*

Grade Level				Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
accrued				damaged			
accrued .....0	0	0	0	damageed .....0	0	0	
	<u>177</u>	<u>127</u>	<u>66</u>		<u>37</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>11</u>
bored				determined			
boreed .....0	0	0	0	determineed .....0	0	0	0
	<u>51</u>	<u>15</u>	<u>7</u>		<u>76</u>	<u>26</u>	<u>42</u>
				galvanized			
				galvanizeed .....0	0	0	0
					<u>66</u>	<u>28</u>	<u>34</u>

Grade Level			
	8th	12th	16th
Total for words ending in <i>-ed</i> covered by the second rule.....	0	0	0
	<u>476</u>	<u>214</u>	<u>164</u>
Per cent for words ending in <i>-ed</i> covered by the second rule.....	0	0	0
Total for all words to which the rule, as stated, applies.....	57	32	10
	<u>1294</u>	<u>621</u>	<u>410</u>
Per cent for all words to which the rule, as stated, applies.....	4.40%	5.15%	2.44%

The words given in the preceding table are grouped according to the suffix which is added to the base forms. Those words ending in *-ion*, *-ions*, and *-ed* did not present a single case at any of the three levels which the application of the rule would have entirely corrected. Since only one word appears which ends in *-ous*, no conclusions can be made regarding the percent of misspellings which might be eliminated if the rule were applied to words involving this suffix.

In the case of words ending in *-ing*, the rule has a greater possibility of usefulness. It is interesting to note that three of the words in this group which present practically no misspellings which the application of the rule would entirely correct, are four or more syllables in length. The other two words, one being a two syllable word and the other a three syllable word, account for practically

all the misspellings which the application of the rule would entirely correct. The number of words given here is too small to allow any general conclusions but the data do raise the problem of whether or not the retention of the final *-e* might not be to some extent correlated with the length of the word or the number of syllables comprising it.

As stated, this second rule covers only those suffixes beginning with vowels. One would infer, however, that when a suffix beginning with a consonant was to be added to a word ending in a final silent *-e*, that the *-e* should be retained. The words which such an inferred application of the rule would cover together with the forms of misspelling in which the only errors are covered by the rule when it is thus interpreted, are given in Table 3.

TABLE 3

## I. Words to which Rule Number Two may be inferred to apply.

	Grade Level				Grade Level		
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
affectionately				definitely			
affectionatly .....17	3	1		definitly .....12	10	3	
	89	33	10		144	70	24
immediately				immensely			
immediatly .....25	0	2		immensly .....23	26	20	
	97	14	7		134	64	48
approximately				indefinitely			
approximatly .....5	9	4		indefinitly .....13	11	4	
	123	55	14		131	18	34
comparatively				unfortunately			
compariatly .....7	4	2		unfortunatly .....33	18	4	
	136	84	41		81	42	12
				Grade Level			
				8th	12th	16th	
Total for words ending in <i>-ly</i>				135	84	40	
covered by inferred application				935	380	190	
of the second rule.....							
Per cent for words ending in <i>-ly</i>							
covered by inferred application							
of the second rule.....				14.44%	22.11%	21.05%	

TABLE 3 (continued)

II. Words ending in *-ments*

	Grade Level		
	8th	12th	16th
arrangements			
arrangments .....	21	10	2
	<u>59</u>	<u>17</u>	<u>6</u>
	Grade Level		
	8th	12th	16th
Total for all words which the inferred application of the second rule covers .....	156	94	42
	<u>994</u>	<u>397</u>	<u>196</u>
Per cent for all words which the inferred application of the second rule covers .....	15.69%	23.67%	21.43%
	Grade Level		
	8th	12th	16th
Total for all words which the stated and inferred application of the second rule covers .....	213	126	52
	<u>2285</u>	<u>1018</u>	<u>696</u>
Per cent for all words which the stated and inferred application of the second rule covers .....	9.31%	12.58%	8.58%

In addition to the above words, the two words, *acknowledgment* and *judgment*, which were in the original list, should be considered. The first of these, the word *acknowledgment*, is an exception to the inference made concerning the application of the rule. The other word, *judgment*, which is the preferred form, is considered equally correct when spelled *judgement*.

The per cent of the total misspellings at the three grade levels, which the implied application of the rule would entirely correct, is more than triple the per cent which the appli-

cation of the rule as stated would entirely correct. The number of words falling under the direct statement of the rule is larger than the number of words to which the inferred application of the rule would apply.

The data given above raise an interesting problem. A count should be made of the cases falling under the direct application of the rule and those falling under the inferred application of this rule. It is possible that to make this rule most effective it should be restated so as to cover directly the suffixes beginning with consonants.

TABLE 4  
RULE NUMBER THREE

*Words ending in a consonant and -y, change -y to -i before all suffixes except those beginning with -i.*

	Grade Level				Grade Level		
	8th	12th	16th		8th	12th	16th
agencies				buried			
agencys .....	18	4	2	buried .....	3	0	0
	<u>35</u>	<u>19</u>	<u>7</u>		<u>83</u>	<u>35</u>	<u>22</u>



TABLE 4 (continued)

Grade Level			Grade Level		
8th	12th	16th	8th	12th	16th
necessarily			mysterious		
necessarly .....5	0	0	mysteryous .....0	0	0
113	53	15	88	27	9
opportunities			satisfactorily		
opportunitys .....5	0	0	satisfactorly .....2	1	0
89	25	15	101	73	35
courtesies			temporarily		
courtesys .....9	18	5	temporarly .....0	0	0
118	83	42	130	67	35
enemies			ordinarily		
enemys .....19	0	0	ordinarly .....5	0	0
75	11	2	124	68	29
facilities			vacancies		
facilitys .....1	0	0	vacancys .....4	1	0
103	42	9	103	21	11
Total for the words which			Grade Level		
third rule covers.....			8th	12th	16th
			71	24	7
			1212	524	231
Per cents for words which					
the third rule covers.....			5.86%	4.58%	3.03%

The changing of *y* to *i* before adding suffixes apparently gives little trouble. A number of the words coming under this rule

rank among the very difficult words but very few of the misspellings would be entirely corrected by the application of the rule alone.

TABLE 5  
RULE NUMBER FOUR

*When i and e occur together in one syllable, and are pronounced as ē or ě, it is always i before e except after c (see): When sounded like ā, it is always e before i.*

Grade Level			Grade Level		
8th	12th	16th	8th	12th	16th
conceive			receiver		
concieve .....42	30	22	reciever .....40	21	9
100	40	31	58	24	14
receipts			seized		
reciepts .....26	9	6	siezed .....43	35	38
85	30	14	123	51	42

TABLE 5 (continued)

perceive					
percieve .....	42	37	24		
	<u>116</u>	<u>56</u>	<u>32</u>		
<b>Total for the words which the fourth rule covers .....</b>				<b>8th</b>	<b>12th</b>
				193	132
				<u>482</u>	<u>201</u>
					<b>16th</b>
					99
					<u>133</u>
<b>Per cents for words which the fourth rule covers .....</b>				40.04%	65.6%
					74.44%

The *ie* and *ei* combinations have always offered considerable difficulty. For the more commonly used words coming under this fourth rule, the application of the rule would alone entirely correct a very large percentage of their misspellings.

#### SUMMARY

1. The four spelling rules quoted in this study may be applied to fifty-one of the 268 most difficult words found within the 5,000 most frequently used words.
2. The rule relating to the doubling of the final consonant when adding a suffix beginning with a vowel, may be applied to nine of the fifty-one words. In the case of these nine words, the application of the rule would entirely correct sixty to seventy-five per cent of the misspellings.
3. Twenty-five of the fifty-one words fall under the rule relating to the dropping of the final silent *-e* before a suffix beginning with a vowel. The misspellings which the application of this rule would entirely correct, make up about ten per cent of all misspellings of these twenty-five words. On the basis of the words considered, the inferred application of this

rule is of greater value than its direct application.

4. In the twelve words covered by the rule relating to the change of *-y* to *-i* before certain suffixes, five per cent and less of the misspellings could be entirely corrected by applying the rule.
5. The rule relating to words in which the *ie* or *ei* combination occurs, is applicable to but five of the fifty-one words. The rule, if applied to these five words, would entirely correct forty to seventy-five per cent of all the misspellings of these five words.
6. In general, the four rules quoted in this article may be applied to but few of the difficult common words. They also vary considerably in their value to the words which they do cover.
7. An extensive study is needed to determine the number of frequently used words to which the more important spelling rules may be applied. Such a study should also attempt to discover if the application of these rules would eliminate a large number of the spelling errors now occurring in the attempted spelling of these words.

## SOME TOPICS IN GEOGRAPHY OF VALUE TO THE ENGLISH CLASS<sup>1</sup>

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MANY YEARS AGO, in a principals' meeting of a large city, the subject of English composition for children in the intermediate grades was under consideration. During the discussion, one of the principals, in a facetious manner, made this remark: "We must remember that there is a vast difference between *having something to say* and *having to say something*." This statement has been of exceeding value to the writer in his efforts to teach geography and to have pupils and students express their geographical knowledge in good English. Written composition and oral composition are of value to the pupil only as he has a motive for expression; something to say and an opportunity and an urge to say it in his best way.

Geographical topics have peculiar value in furnishing ideas for expression. Geography deals with concrete materials of human interest. The home locality furnishes specific illustrations of the great majority of geographical concepts. To understand the geography of the local community in which pupils live is to secure the mental concepts with which to interpret the lands and the peoples of distant regions of the homeland and the world.

Oral composition had been given a definite place in the curriculum of a city school system. Results were not equal to the expectations, but under the requirements of the curriculum the children had to say something. This school system, a few years later, developed a course of study in geography, with home geography as the beginning course. The home geography was based on a definite study of the geographic topics of the community. Pupils learned at first hand the

simple geographic facts and relationships involved in a study of food, clothing, shelter, fuel, forms of land and water, weather, change of seasons, transportation, communication, and other topics of geographic nature. Observations thus made provided concrete ideas for use in the geography class and frequently in oral composition. The children now had something to say, and they were eager to say it.

The supervisor of the primary grades noted the improvement in the work of the oral composition of the third grade and sought an explanation. Home geography, in well organized, concrete form, was having its first presentation in the third grade of this school system. The supervisor soon discovered that the material being used effectively in oral composition was coming largely from the field studies and observational work of the home geography course. This evident relationship between geography and oral composition led the supervisor to request third grade teachers to place the oral composition period immediately following the home geography period. The results were considered a vast improvement over former attempts at oral composition. The pupils were eager to speak as well as possible when they had the assurance of ideas that were simple, clear, and related to their own every day experiences.

Any community has many topics of geographic nature which may form a basis for good English expression, both written and oral. If a pupil or a group of pupils in the intermediate or upper grades were to investigate the commerce of a small freight depot, and report on the exports and imports of the town, the topic would yield valuable geographic material as well as opportunity for

<sup>1</sup> An extensive study of children's interest in doing independent work in certain phases of geography has been made by Professor Ridgely. The results of this study are found in a monograph entitled *A Study of Children's Learning About Places*, published by the Department of Geography, Clark University, Worcester, Massachusetts.



English composition. The operations of the local post office or telegraph office offer valuable material for investigation and report. A properly organized excursion to a local grocery store or to a wholesale grocery, with the consent and under the guidance of the owners, yields rich results. Systematic and thorough study of a small factory, a water power site, a stream valley, a farm with its various activities, gives meaning to the real values of the locality and forms a sound basis for interpreting the reading about distant places.

The writer, some years ago, taught an extension class in the teaching of geography in a city located on a river. On one occasion we left the classroom for a field lesson to study the advantages of the location of the city. We secured permission to go to the roof of one of the larger buildings in the business district. From this advantageous position we were able to see the city and its environs better than by means of much travel along the streets. Observation showed the city to be located at a narrow place in the river, spanned by railroad bridges and highway bridges. The location of the business district along the plain above the high water stages of the river was evident. The extension of the city to the river bluffs, up the valley side, and on the level uplands was seen at a glance. The influence of the river valley in the location of railroads and street car lines was a topic of study. It was obvious that the directions of the streets on the lowland had been determined by the northeast-southwest trend of the valley, while the streets on the level upland above the river bluff were laid out along east-west, and north-south lines.

The supervisor of intermediate grades accompanied the class on this field trip. One of her special interests was English. During the following year she developed a plan whereby fifth and sixth grade classes could make this same trip as field work in both geography and English. The trip was well planned and well conducted. The results furnished ample material for lessons in geography classes whereby observations were interpreted and re-

lated, and for lessons in English in which the pupil *had something to say*, and was eager to say it in his very best way.

The teaching of "place geography" has given geography teachers much concern. If geography is given over to a study of places as isolated topics, the work becomes mechanical, uninteresting, and of comparatively little value. If the study deals with large and interesting topics without paying due attention to the definite place relationships involved, the work does not fulfill the requirements of sound geography learning and teaching. Associated with every large geographic topic, such as the corn belt, the cotton belt, irrigation, the Pacific states, a journey to Japan, there are names of land forms, states, and cities which must be definitely and permanently related to the topics of study if the learning and the teaching of geography is to be effective. In every geography exercise involving a definite study of places, provision should be made for developing correct ideas about three items concerning each place studied:

1. Name, including spelling and pronunciation.
2. Location, involving a statement of sufficient fullness to enable another person to find the place readily on a map.
3. Information about the place. This may include the outstanding geographic facts, historic information, and other items of interest and value to one who is planning to visit the place, whether it be a city, a country, a mountain, a lake, or any other place.

The first and second items are briefly treated for any place. The third item is capable of expansion to any limit set by the pupil's interest and industry. An interesting exercise may be developed while studying the cotton belt. Pupils, guided by the teacher, may make a list of places worthy of study in this topic. Each pupil should obtain for himself the facts involved in the first two items, and some facts for item three. Each pupil then may select one or two places from

(Continued on page 222)

## EDITORIALS

### *Advice is Necessary*

THE OPENING article in this number of THE REVIEW, "Recent Guide-Posts in Juvenile Literature," by Miss Carrie E. Scott, is the initial paper of a series of articles on children's literature. This series is sponsored by the Children's Librarians' Section of the American Library Association, under the direction of Miss Helen Martin, Chairman of the Book Evaluation Committee.

The decided success of a similar series of papers published last year increases the interest that will be taken in the announcement of Miss Martin's completed schedule, which will be ready shortly.

It is hard to estimate the value of these discussions on children's literature to elementary school teachers and librarians. The publishers' output of books ranges from excellent to poor, with many mediocre offerings and books of doubtful merit. It is an almost impossible task for the person who is not a specialist, or for one who is not constantly studying the problem, to choose wisely and without blunder. The need for expert judgment is a real one.

The series will contain discussions of outstanding new books of the fall, winter, and spring, the appraisal of recent research in

children's reading, the choice of books for special occasions—Christmas gifts, for example, the selection of books for little children, the illustrators of children's books, and a consideration of the merits of certain series of primers and readers.

### *Know Your Neighbors*

THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW will publish from time to time this year, supplementary articles on geography and arithmetic. These will in no way supplant discussions in English, but will, it is hoped, supplement them.

There is an obvious demand for such supplementation from teachers whose schedules include several subjects in addition to English, and from the supervisors and principals who oversee the work of these teachers. It is highly important, furthermore, that even the teacher specializing in English keep well informed on the work in other subjects. Narrow specialization is always undesirable, particularly so when language is concerned.

On page 220 there appears the first of these papers, "Some Topics in Geography of Value to the English Class," by Professor Douglas C. Ridgley, of Clark University. Professor Ridgley points out that there is a difference between having something to say, and having

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### SOME TOPICS IN GEOGRAPHY

*(Continued from page 221)*

the list for special study. He is to read and learn many things about the place selected, and to organize his knowledge in proper form for presentation to the class. In presenting his results orally he should make skillful use of maps, pictures, and specimens to illustrate his discussion. As the chief speaker on the selected topic he is to give his audience accurate, well organized information that will instruct them better than the same amount of time in reading; he is to give the results of his investigation as good geography and as good English.

All this work is appropriate to the geography class. The final, formal presentation of such an exercise may appropriately be given in the class period for oral English, or the topic may furnish an exercise in written composition.

The room teacher will find this correlation of geographic investigation and oral or written presentation in English easy and natural. The departmental teachers of geography and English can co-operate readily in the preparation and the presentation of geographic information.

## REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS

FROM PANAMA TO CAPE HORN. By Ethel Imogene Salisbury Yonkers-on-Hudson, World Book Company. 1927.

This geographical reader tells the story of South America, past and present, with its colorful romance and practical commercial possibilities, in the most attractive manner.

To the reader South America ceases to be a vague isolated region, and becomes a romantic country, with a widely assorted population, a vivid history, and great commercial possibilities.

Children in the intermediate grades will take great delight in visiting in imagination its beautiful and progressive cities, and in penetrating the jungles where rubber and coffee are obtained. The life and customs of the ancient Peruvians, before the destruction of the proud empire of the Incas and the rule of the Caribbean Sea by pirates and buccanniers, will be most thrilling and fascinating alike to boys and girls.

The struggle of the Latin American peoples for independence is especially significant for our American pupils. The strange mixture of races, their customs and home life are accurately portrayed.

The illustrations are numerous and owing to the frequency of photographs, their accuracy is reasonably assured. There are plenty of maps, one of which, an old-time picture map in the front of the book, serves to recall whatever knowledge the pupil may have attained. A comparison can easily be made with other maps and progress noted.

There are clever exercises at the end of each chapter entitled, "Things To Do and To Think About," which will stimulate interest and activity and assist the pupil in retaining what he has learned.

The author has aimed to produce a book which would prove valuable in supplementing the pupil's study of geography and to supply a background of concrete knowledge. In this respect I am sure that the work has been very successfully and completely accomplished.

—Lela M. Hamm

THIS EARTH WE LIVE ON. By E. W. Duval, N. Y. Frederick A. Stokes. 1927.

Often a child is confused when an ordinary printed geography is thrust into his hands for the first time. His little mind is awl with the wonders of nature and mankind as expressed by the more mature vocabulary of the average geographic text book.

Mrs. Duval met the situation of teaching the subject to her child by making her own books, showing with color, variety, and life the facts about the world.

The book, *THIS EARTH WE LIVE ON*, is a result of her efforts to make the subject of the earth, its people and its countries, industries and cities, vitally interesting to young children.

The brief text is in good size, blackfaced type. The margins are wide and the paper very durable for child usage. Every topic is illustrated with a drawing in color, but the child must read to find out about the pictures, as there are few notations under them. By so doing he is led on as if by magic to get an idea of the earth as a whole.

The maps are alluring, with pictures character-

istic of each country. This gives the reader an association from his own background and links the old with the new.

Mrs. Percival C. Wharton is the illustrator of the book. The pictures are strong in outline and free from vague details; the color schemes are simple and clear. By such pictures the young child's powers of observation and memory are developed to a much higher degree.

This book is not a text book, but admirable as a supplementary reader and as a volume for home libraries of children from six to ten, answering their many questions of the why and wherefore of this earth.

—Marion J. Buckrell

MORNINGS IN MEXICO. By D. H. Lawrence. N. Y. Alfred A. Knopf. 1927.

Lawrence, in a series of attractive sketches, describes Mexico as it appears to one when first visiting that unusual and picturesque country.

A strange land, strange people and even stranger customs are unfolded before us. A stillness permeates our beings as we travel along on that Sunday morning to Huayapa. We see the smoky hills, the lonely little villages dotting the hillsides, the shadeless valley of thorny wilderness, and last, but not of least importance, the sun, a blazing ball of fire. At length we reach our journey's end, Huayapa. Such an odd little town it is, with its mud brick huts, its cactus lined tracks or stony stream beds for streets, its forlorn, ragged church and plaza, its silence, its heavy secretiveness.

Lawrence takes us to the very heart of Indian life, to their beliefs, their manners, their dances. We feel a stirring within us as we read about the lofty pines silhouetted against the darkening sky, the moving figures of the Indians in the firelight, the steady beating of the drums, and the lifting and dropping of the male voices in song.

We feel the impressive beauty of the Corn Dance of the Zapotec people and the horror, the grotesqueness of the Hopi Indians' Snake Dance.

At another time we enter into the spirit of market day, which, in the morning appears as some great pilgrimage. People of all ages form continuous lines, down the dusty roads, all coming from miles around to commingle with other humans and incidentally to sell their products.

The story is so realistically told and in so attractive and whimsical a style that apart from the entertainment afforded, the reader is made to feel that he is an integral part of the experiences related.

—Dora E. Bowlby

THE VOCABULARY SPELLER. By John G. Gilmartin. Two Volumes. N. Y. Charles Scribner's Sons. 1926.

The first volume includes the first four grades, the second, through the eighth. The method is tedious, monotonous and without variety. There is no provision for individual differences and in spite of the glowing results obtained from the experiment as described by the author, I did not feel as if I were reading a modern text book.

The method is based upon the steps used by Horn, Russell and other spelling authorities but is carried on with oral work in unison, each pupil doing the same step with the same word at the same time. Each lesson consists of twenty words, four



new, sixteen review. The words are written on the board, under a map, and exposed to the view of the children all day except during the dictation period. There is no provision for initial testing. The word list for the second year seemed difficult as compared with other lists.

The lessons are printed in type of varying size to emphasize the difficult spots in the words. I found this quite annoying. There is provision for syllabication and sentence drill.

The author warns the teacher in the preface that the first impression may be the amount of labor entailed in the method but after a week or two of use she will change her mind. In spite of this warning, my impression from reading the book is its burdensome procedure.

—*Georgina Germain*

**A GUIDE TO LITERATURE FOR CHARACTER TRAINING.** By Edwin D. Starbuck and Frank B. Shuttleworth. N. Y. Macmillan. 1928.

In this book the authors exhibit full appreciation of story telling as one of the world's oldest arts.

Prior to the age of printing, stories were told and retold with slight variations, but always for certain purposes—for entertainment, to bring out a moral or to clinch an argument. Since printing has become universal stories have multiplied until they now cover a wide range.

It is now being recognized that the reading of stories is an essential to character education. It is therefore vitally important that educators be responsible for the selection of the proper literature to be used during childhood and adolescence in order that the millions, from ocean to ocean, of diverse

race, breeding, and occupation can better grow together in mind as they should grow, by knowing together and loving together some of the best things in literature.

The problem of preparing a guide to the selection of such literature involves principles and technique for judging, grading and classifying it. The authors have set forth these eight standards of judgment of literary quality: unity, right craftsmanship, agreeable emotional tone, effectiveness, artistry in appeal, truthfulness, refinement of the fundamental human attitudes, and proper orientation. They have defined what is meant by each of these standards. Their style of definition is so direct that it affords a sense of appeal in its very reading. For, say the authors, "Not that literature need always be serious, sometimes it moves mightily like the tides, and sometimes however, it is as delicate as flowers and airy as dreams."

The authors state clearly that not only is story telling an art but that there is art in story telling and that in this parents and teachers must adapt themselves to meet specific needs. For them this book is a trustworthy guide. After reading chapter five and referring to the unusual indexes that are so comprehensive in detail, any subject matter, many stories, or the names of the authors of many stories, can readily be located.

Parents and instructors who will use it will find these stories classified to meet the needs of the age and grade of the pupil. They will find it is a real tool to aid them in directing intelligently the recreational reading of children. It is an equally valuable aid to the story teller.

—*Ethelyn Wilson*

<sup>1</sup>Chapter I, page 15.

## EDITORIALS

(Continued from page 222)

to say something. Subjects such as geography furnish children with matter for expression, and when properly taught, with a desire for expression as well.

Professor Ridgley's article will, not doubt recall to many readers similar experiences.

The editor will be interested to hear of these.

The editorial responsibility of THE ELEMENTARY ENGLISH REVIEW in these matters is being extended likewise to include occasional book reviews in geography and arithmetic.

## REMINISCENT LITERATURE

(Continued from page 207)

basis of comparison with the others.

### BOOKS MENTIONED IN THIS ARTICLE

Tar—Sherwood Anderson, Boni and Liveright, 1926.

The World That Was—John G. Bowman, McMillan Company, 1926.

Far Away and Long Ago—W. H. Hudson, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926.

Marbacka—Selma Lagerlöf, Doubleday, Doran Co., 1926.

Wood cuts—J. J. Lankes

Rootabaga Stories—Carl Sandburg, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1922.

Rootabaga Pigeons—Carl Sandburg, Harcourt Brace & Co., 1923.

Illustrated by Maud and Miska Petersham.

The Little Long Ago—Laura Spencer Porter, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1927.

Many illustrations by Maginel Wright Barney.

When We Were Very Young—A. A. Milne, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1924.

Winnie, The Pooh—A. A. Milne, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926.

Now We Are Six—A. A. Milne, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1926.

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